

5 Post 9/16/65
Socialism In
The U.S.

To The Editor, Sir

It has been said that people who are opposed to socialism should refuse to accept social security checks or to ride on the nation's highways. This is saying that people who are opposed to being robbed should refuse to accept the return of part of their property because they disapproved of its being stolen in the first place.

There is wide spread confusion these days about socialism and its effects. The fact that we are achieving a higher standard of living while adopting more and more socialism, leads some people to assume that the former is the result of the latter. This is a false assumption. We are attaining a higher standard of living in spite of, not because of, socialism. Take, for instance, the Tennessee Valley Authority, that vaunted example of American socialism. Granted it is a wonderful project. Granted also it is not self supporting. Taxes must be collected from Maine to California to keep it going. Under private enterprise it would necessarily have to be run efficiently enough to pay taxes, thus adding to the government income instead of to its debt. Consider, too, how much less our electricity would cost if we didn't have to subsidize TVA.

So it is with all of our subsidized government owned and managed one - third of the economy. The remaining two - thirds under private enterprise must carry the load of government experimentation and inefficiency. That it can carry such a load and still raise our standard of living is the marvel of the century.

Historically, socialism has always been backward looking. In the early days of industrialization in England, the socialists cried out against the use of power looms because it "would put people out of work", just as they now cry out against automation. Try to imagine the 1965 housewife peddling away at her foot treadle loom to weave the cloth for the family clothing, as she would have had to do if the socialists of those days had had their way. However, they would

have been right about one thing. There would be no unemployment. Everybody, from baby to great - grandma, would have to work as long and hard as they could to secure the simplest necessities of life.

Socialists have traditionally been bitter in their denunciation of great inventors and industrialists, and particularly of any such combination of the two as Ford, who produced the "Tin Lizzie" and put America on wheels. Socialism would have kept Ford milking cows and Edison selling papers. And the wheels on which America would be riding today would be buggywheels, and our lights oil lamps.

It is difficult to imagine how much poorer our lives would have been without our great inventors and industrialists, or

what gains we might have made had not industry had such a heavy load of government to carry. And the prospects for the future might be almost limitless should the American people decide to return to the system of freedom under which our country grew so great.

It may be that socialism is surely "the wave of the future". Present signs point that way, particularly the tremendous socialist landslide at the polls last November. But if it is, we have only to look at Soviet Russia to see what our lives will then be like. There socialism has been given a thorough nationwide and two generations long testing. And it takes an iron curtain and Berlin Wall to keep its people from "voting with their feet" against it. Indeed there is nothing to stop those who really want socialism from having it right now. All they need do is cross the Wall from west to east. It is a one-way barrier. There are no machine guns on this side to stop them.

ANNE V. HOUCK
Rocky Ridge, Md.

Defends Federal
Employees

To The Editor, Sir:

Your recent editorial comment entitled "A Great Bunch" quotes two numbers from a Senator Byrd committee report to prove increased federal employment and concludes as follows: "Oh well, there can be no Great Society without a great big bunch of bureaucrats to run it." I realize that it is quite common for editors across the country to jibe we bureaucrats — but a very substantial number of us live with you; don't you know us better? It seems to me your bit of sarcastic generality serves only to degrade federal employment at a time when encouragement is in order.

Walter Lippman presents a more constructive argument in his September 7 Speaking of our Great Society Goals, he says, "I am thinking of the politicians and the civil servants and the voters who must carry out these vast and intricate measures and of how they already have too much to do and where they are to find a fresh source of energy within themselves. . . . The hardest part of the work on the Great Society still lies ahead of us, ahead of the President, ahead of the Congress, ahead of the press and the voters.

"To realize that extraordinary demands will be made upon us is not yet wisdom. But it is the beginning of wisdom."

Incidentally, the other half of the Senator Byrd truths which you quoted are as follows, (1) President Johnson has substantially reduced Federal Employment. (2) There are far fewer federal employees per capita today than at any other peace time in recent history.

Sincerely Yours,
JOHN C. DEMPSEY